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NORMAN ROSS

Professor Argues Against 'Victory' Goal in Viet Nam

Nearly 8,000 American college and university educators have now signed a petition urging President Johnson "not to enlarge the scope of the war, but instead to work for a neutralized North and South Viet Nam, as separate, federated or reunited states, protected by international guarantees and peacekeeping forces against all outside interference."

The brainchild of the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, the petition has won the signatures of an impressive array of teachers, none more surprising or more worthy of consideration than that of the University of Chicago's brilliant professor of political science, Hans Morgenthau.

For Morgenthau, far from being a "softliner," is a hard-headed realist whose wide knowledge of the past has helped him, over the years, come up with an impressive list of accurate, if not always welcome, predictions of the future.

He believes that however quickly and strongly we react to an attack on one of our

destroyers in what we regard as international waters off North Viet Nam, however many extra "advisers" we add to the 21,000 already in South Viet Nam or slated to go, we cannot win the war there.

Further, he contends that a policy of peripheral containment of Red China, of setting up military strong points around her empire, may slow, but will not stop, her expansion.

All-out war might stop her, and we should realistically consider that as one of our alternatives, remembering Winston Churchill's strictures against becoming bogged down on the mainland of Asia, and the fate of Japan when her armies did so.

It would be unrealistic and foolish to overestimate China's current military strength, even should she, as once again rumored, detonate her own nuclear device before the end of the year.

But if we did commit our full strength to peripheral containment, and risked war with her, how could we defeat 700,000,000 people spread over a great land mass? Even the late Gen. Douglas MacArthur, when he pressed for us to carry the Korean War beyond the Yalu did not suggest that we try to do so.

If we were to bomb all Chinese cities of over 100,000 population, we might kill 100,000,000 people, but even then would only cripple but not destroy her.

SAYS Morgenthau: "The point is that for the past 50 years of our relationship with China, we have set an objective we couldn't achieve with the means we were willing to employ."

This is, of course, exactly the argument of President Charles de Gaulle. When he saw, in the Cuban missile crisis, that we really meant business, that we were willing to "go for broke," he backed us unequivocally and immediately, something even our close British allies certainly did not do. He does not believe we would be willing to go all out against Red China, which in one reason he presses for an attempt to persuade the Chinese to agree to a neutralized Southeast Asia.

What of the nearly \$3 billion we've poured into our effort there at the rate of \$1,500,000 a day? And the more than 160 American lives we've already expended? And our increase by a third in the number of our advisers? And this past weekend's strong response to the firing on our destroyer?

All fine, because as Churchill told us, we must "arm to parley," and if we negotiate, will salvage most if a strong policy of "clear and hold" gives us a maximum amount of pro-Western territory. But it takes 10 regular troops to stand off one guerrilla, and our current ratio is only about half that, not nearly enough.

DR. MORGENTHAU believes that the South Vietnamese are fighting with such indifference because we have a conception of what we want in the area but they do not. He recalls an incident in which an American correspondent was with a small South Vietnamese unit whose commanding officer, on learning that there was a North Vietnamese road block ahead, ordered a retreat.

"Why don't you blow it up?" asked the American. Replied the officer: "You go. It's your war, not ours."

He does not believe that there is much chance that, war weary as they are, they will ever regard this as their war, but does feel that North Viet Nam's Ho Chi Minh might become Southeast Asia's Tito, and that Mao Tze-tung's successors might be pressured into accepting a neutralized Southeast Asia if we forge a coalition policy which our allies, France and Britain in particular, can back with enthusiasm as they certainly don't back our current one.

If de Gaulle was more hard-headed than the colonists in insisting that France cut her losses by getting out of Algeria, argues Morgenthau, our most hard-headed policy might well be not to insist on "victory" in what was Indo-China, but to press for neutralization.